

February 21, 2017

Dear Senator Catherine Olson; Senator Paul Formica; Representative Toni Walker,

Re: Testimony for Public Hearing - Appropriations Committee

Why Wintergreen Inter-district Magnet School (WIMS) is important to us.

The neighborhood school we are districted to is a good school, but offers an "open classroom." I didn't think that would be the right environment for my daughter. I researched, visited and considered catholic or private schools, but honestly they are quite costly and do these schools offer a better education than public schools? Do they prepare our children for the future? Are they diverse enough? I wasn't sold they would offer what I desired for my child and her education.

I spoke to some people who attended WIMS and I was encouraged to apply, so I did, and, as my daughter says, won the lottery. *Worth noting: two of WIMS alumnus I spoke to are now teachers.*

When I walked into WIMS I knew I made the right decision. The school has wonderful teachers and staff; it's a close knit community (even though it's a large school). It definitely offers the diversity, education and programs (such as art, Spanish, music) I wanted for my daughter which is tremendously important to me.

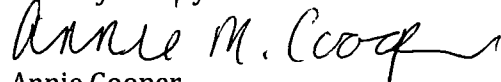
So here's our story:

My daughter struggles with reading, the resources at WIMS that she has access to have been a saving grace. She has been provided extra help since Kindergarten (she is in 3rd grade currently). She continues to grow and become more and more confident in her abilities. She is quite the reader now.

Her reading tutor this year saw she was a bit ahead of her fellow classmates who were also receiving extra help and made the suggestion that I allow my daughter to be part of the 4th grade intervention group. I am not an educator so the thing I appreciated the most was I DID NOT have to ask for extra help or beg for resources. They provided exactly what my daughter needed - how awesome is that? I check in once a month via e-mail and always receive a speedy response on her progress. **These teachers are dedicated to giving our children what they need to succeed. Cutting funding would be a detriment to WIMS as well as many other magnet schools in CT.**

I am fortunate enough to pay for a private tutor as well, but many families cannot, If funding is threaten other children who may face the same challenges as my daughter may not be so lucky, how is that fair? Should we strive for better for all children?

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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